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- c) a heating apparatus located above said work bench and positioned in a hood for ventilation and air circulation.--

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-5 have been canceled and claims 6-11 have been added to the application. The specification has been amended. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner has objected to the specification because it did not contain the proper headings. The Applicants have added headings to the specification as suggested by the Examiner.

The Examiner rejected claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 112 for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicant regards as the invention. The Applicants have amended claim 1 to overcome this rejection.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-5 under 35 USC 112 as being indefinite. The Applicants have canceled these claims and submit new claims 6-11 to overcome this rejection.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1, 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by *Deroode* and under 35 USC 103(a) as

being unpatentable over *Deroode* in view of *Meredith*. Claim 3 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Deroode*. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Deroode* and further in view of *Ito et al.* The Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections. The Applicants have canceled claims 1, 4 and 5 and submits new claims 6-11 to overcome this rejection. In addition, the Applicants submit that the present invention is not obvious in view of *Deroode* in combination with *Meredith* or *Ito*.

Deroode discloses a method and apparatus for the thermal sublimation transfer decoration of a three-dimensional substrate. However, the method and apparatus disclosed by *Deroode* only provides for decoration of one side of the substrate, as may be seen from the figures of the disclosed in *Deroode*. *Deroode* does not teach or suggest decorating the whole surface of the substrate in a single step as made possible by the invention claimed in the present invention.

The present invention provides for wrapping up or tight-covering the artifact to be decorated with the sublimable transfer support and creating a vacuum between the artifact and the support. This allows application of decorations on the whole 3-D surface of the artifact in a single step, thus reducing time and costs involved.

In addition, *Deroode* does not disclose the use of a thermoformable material, such as sublimable color transfer support. On the contrary, *Deroode*, at lines 14 to 17 of column 4, teaches to use a material capable of withstanding high temperatures within the range between 140°C and 200°C for the support skin. Therefore, the material suggested by *Deroode* for the support skin is not a thermoformable material.


The use of a thermoformable material, as claimed in the present application, improves the intimate contact between the sublimable transfer support and the surfaces of the artifact to be decorated. This improvement occurs when the vacuum is created and heat is applied to the transfer support and to the artifact, causing the transfer support to stick to the surface of the artifact thereby improving intimate contact with the surface. This intimate contact is necessary for a good transfer of decoration onto the surface of the artifact.

Furthermore, the use of a thermoformable material for the sublimable transfer support indicates that thermal adhesion of the support to the surface of the artifact is obtained. Therefore, the use of the material for adhesion purposes is not obvious in view of *Ito* in combination with *Deroode*. In fact *Ito*, at lines 9 to 14 of column 7, teaches that sticking of the transfer support is not desirable. Accordingly, *Ito* teaches away from using a material that will adhere to the surface of the artifact.

The Applicants submit that the above amendments and remarks place the application in condition for allowance. Early allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

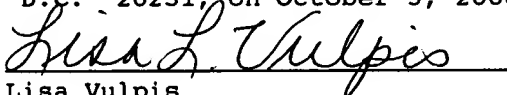
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Enclosure: Petition for a two-month extension of time
Check for \$195.00

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on October 5, 2000.


Lisa Vulpis